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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA DART SITUATION REPORT 4 ? FOOD AID  
UPDATE

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#### SUMMARY

¶1. The 2007 UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for Somalia estimates that 1.4 million people are food insecure. In response, the UN World Food Program (WFP) plans to deliver 114,000 metric tons (MT) to more than 1 million people, and CARE plans to distribute food to approximately 400,000 others. Distribution of food aid has been complicated by flooding, conflict, insecurity, closure of the Kenya-Somalia border, and other operational constraints. Despite these challenges, distributions continue and food stocks available for Somalia are currently sufficient to meet the estimated caseload through May 2007. As of January 16, the humanitarian community does not expect a significant increase in the current food caseload, unless the conflict in southern Somalia is prolonged or another climatic shock occurs. End Summary.

#### BACKGROUND

¶2. USAID's major food distribution partners in Somalia are WFP and the non-governmental organization (NGO) CARE. Both organizations transport food by air, road, and water to reach beneficiaries. WFP operates in all regions of Somalia, and CARE operates in Gedo, Hiraan, and Middle Shabelle regions. In 2006, through WFP and CARE, USAID provided 121,000 MT of food aid valued at \$81 million to Somalia.

¶3. Large parts of southern Somalia received below-average rains in 2005 and 2006, resulting in failed

harvests and stressed grazing areas. Relentless rains at the end of 2006, although good for pasture and water replenishment, have only increased vulnerability by disrupting agricultural activities and destroying household assets.

¶4. Persistent insecurity and renewed civil strife in southern Somalia, including the recent intervention by Ethiopian forces, have further depressed the coping mechanisms of the population and exacerbated acute food shortages and hunger affecting an estimated 1.4 million people. In December, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) reported a 17 percent global acute malnutrition rate and a 3.2 percent severe acute malnutrition rate in El Barde, Bakool Region. Although malnutrition rates are not this high throughout Somalia, there are pockets of malnutrition caused by food insecurity nationwide.

#### FOOD DELIVERY HAMPERED BY FLOODS AND CONFLICT

¶5. In November and December, heavy rains hampered the overland movement of hundreds of trucks delivering WFP relief food. While trying to reach flooded villages, food convoys were unable to traverse inundated roads. In November, a special air operation was activated to transport critical food and relief commodities to inaccessible areas in southern Somalia. WFP chartered two helicopters to ferry food to Lower and Middle Juba regions, the most severely flood-affected areas, basing them in Kismayo. Additionally, WFP used nine riverboats, each with a two MT capacity, based in Buaale, Middle Shabelle Region, to deliver relief food to communities cut off by flooding along the Juba River.

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¶6. In recent weeks, the flood waters have receded and roads have begun drying out, allowing transport of commodities overland to resume on a limited basis. Road access is expected to return to previous levels if weather patterns continue to be favorable and the security situation stabilizes. Overland transport is becoming increasingly important to WFP as flights out of Kismayo Airport have halted following the takeover of the airfield by Ethiopian forces the week of January ¶1. The last airdrops occurred December 25 and 26 in Afmadow District.

¶7. WFP predicts that in the near future humanitarian flights will not be able to use the Kismayo airfield. As a result, WFP may cancel the helicopter contract and redirect the remaining \$3 million (from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund) to the movement of food and non-food commodities using Nairobi-based fixed-wing aircraft. WFP has leased a Buffalo aircraft with an eight MT capacity and an Antonov-12 with a 12 to 15 MT capacity in Nairobi. WFP expects to finalize these plans in the coming days.

#### EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

¶8. Of the 1,000 drums of jet 1-A fuel WFP had in Kismayo for airdrops, WFP used 250 drums before insecurity grounded flights. Ethiopian forces took the remaining 750 drums without reimbursing WFP, which had not yet paid the fuel supplier. However, after high-level negotiation in Nairobi and Addis Ababa the week of January 8, Ethiopian forces finally made payment to WFP and the issue was resolved.

¶9. Additionally, an \$80,000 Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG)-levied tax on WFP for a recently off-loaded ship in Mogadishu Port has been rescinded after WFP refused to pay the tax. The WFP

chartered ship off-loaded 4,500 MT over three days at the end of December, during which control of Mogadishu Port changed hands three times.

#### DISTRIBUTIONS

¶10. In 2007, WFP plans to deliver 114,000 MT to more than 1 million people in Somalia. WFP's projections are based on a contingency stock for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the event of future displacement; relief and recovery assistance through March for flood victims; food assistance needs from April to July depending on the success of off-season crops; recessional flood harvests; and the August harvest following the long rains. These projections may change after FSAU's post-harvest assessment, which is due to be released January 31.

¶11. During the last two weeks of December, WFP distributed 2,000 MT of relief food to 93,000 flood-affected people in Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba regions. Food distributions are ongoing in and around Afmadow District using relief supplies carried by a 54-truck convoy that was stuck in the mud for the last seven weeks. Food distributions are also ongoing in Bay and Bakool regions. More than 2,000 MT of food are currently being distributed in the Bardera and Garbahare districts of Gedo Region. These commodities target 115,000 flood and drought-affected people.

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¶12. To assist people in and around Doble town, across the closed Somalia-Kenya border from the Liboi border post, WFP will conduct a one-off distribution of 356 MT for 6,000 IDPs and 12,000 host community members. WFP has acknowledged the potential for creating a draw to this area, but is confident this one-off distribution can be done successfully.

¶13. In December, CARE distributed two-month food rations in Gedo and Hiraaan regions. In Hiraaan Region, the distribution targeted more than 23,000 flood-affected households. The final stages of the distribution in Hiraaan Region were underway as Ethiopian forces entered the area, prompting the distribution team to pull back to Mogadishu. As a result, parts of Hiraaan and Middle Shabelle regions have not yet received food distributions.

#### SOMALIA FOOD STOCKS

¶14. Currently, WFP has 33,400 MT on the ground in Somalia and Kenya, not counting the recent USG contribution of 17,920 MT valued at \$11.5 million. At an approximate burn rate of 12,000 MT per month, WFP's pipeline is strong through April for the current caseload. Including the recent USG contribution, a 62,691 MT shortfall remains for planned WFP interventions through December 2007.

¶15. In Somalia, CARE currently has 12,633 MT located almost entirely in Mogadishu and a small amount in Merka. In Kenya, CARE has 12,426 MT located primarily in Mombasa, with a few stocks in Mandera and El Wak.

#### IMPACT OF INSECURITY AND BORDER CLOSURE ON FOOD AID

¶16. The results of recent military interventions inside Somalia and the subsequent closure of the Somalia-Kenya border have disrupted the movement of food aid commodities into and around Somalia. Despite this disruption, WFP continues to transport food aid to vulnerable communities and conduct distributions. WFP's Somali staff members have weathered similar

situations and are expert at maneuvering across clan, religious, and political lines.

¶17. The precarious security situation in Kismayo and Mogadishu has driven WFP to begin moving food stocks out of warehouses there, to sites in Bay, Bakool, and Middle Shabelle regions. Clan fighting over the Kismayo Port has prompted WFP to move 2,000 MT (out of the 4,000 MT in the warehouse) to Buaale and Sakow. In Mogadishu, WFP plans to move 3,500 MT (of the 6,000 MT) to Bay Region and Wajid town in Bakool Region.

¶18. CARE reports that its staff members are still able to access Gedo Region, but the closure of the Somalia-Kenya border prevents Somali staff from entering Kenya, or international staff from going into Somalia. Insecurity, reported harassment of humanitarian staff, and lawlessness are preventing staff movement in south and central Somalia. As a result, CARE reports that food distributions are currently not possible in south and central Somalia.

¶19. CARE plans to distribute food in Gedo Region in February, but will not be able to unless the Somalia-

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Kenya border re-opens. In late January, CARE plans to distribute food in Hiraan and central regions if the security situation improves sufficiently.

¶20. Since mid-December, insecurity and limited road access prevented a WFP convoy carrying approximately 1,000 MT of food from leaving for Afmadow District. As of January 16, the convoy remains split between Doble, Somalia, and Liboi, Kenya.

#### CONCLUSIONS

¶21. Despite recent disruptions due to insecurity and conflict, the Somalia USG Disaster Assistance Response Team is confident that USAID's partners will be able to continue activities at sufficient levels to meet Somalia's humanitarian needs as soon as the border re-opens and security improves. WFP and CARE both have a long history of working in Somalia and strong relationships with local partners that have enabled the agencies to maneuver among the myriad of clan, religious, and political actors.

¶22. Food stocks either on the ground in Somalia or in the region are sufficient to meet food requirements through May 2007.

¶23. The humanitarian community currently does not expect a significant increase in the number of food insecure Somalis in 2007. However, if conflict and insecurity are sustained in south and central Somalia, and/or another climatic shock occurs, food aid needs will increase.

RANNEBERGER